



Christmas 2024

THE PRACTICE INSIDER

Dispensary update

We are very excited to announce the installation of a new piece of software designed exclusively to improve the efficiency of our dispensary and prescription safety.

This software is called "Titan PMR" and is an NHS-accredited platform that will help transform our Dispensary into a paperless, streamlined workflow that will vastly improve the patient experience in a number of ways.

This software was installed in the last weeks of November - and the Dispensary team are getting more familiar with the new software and equipment every day. As our team gets more familiar with it, we are sure that our dispensing patients will notice reduced turn-around time and a better all-round service.

What's inside

What a treat we've got for you! A bumper edition of the Practice Newsletter - what more could you ask for this festive season?!



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Change is on the horizon



Since the Pandemic, access to healthcare has been the hottest topic amongst patients and healthcare professionals alike. We know, from feedback we receive, that accessing an appointment is one of the most consistent obstacles that you, our patients, experience.

Whether it's long queues on the telephone lines or being told that triage is full; it's a challenge for you, and challenging for our team to meet your needs.

For quite some time, we have been meticulously collating information about what our patients need, what technology is out there to help us deliver those needs, and how our processes as a Surgery can be altered to help us provide a better service to you all... and soon, all of that hard work will start bearing fruit.

Now, it is important to say that the change detailed next **will not be a magic fix**. No amount of technology or procedure change will fix the fact that General Practice (and the NHS as a whole) is experiencing one of the most challenging periods in its history; chronic under-funding and under-staffing have long undermined our ability to provide safe and effective care for a growing population.

But we are hopeful that this change will *improve* your experience of accessing an appointment with us in the future.

Keep reading overleaf!



Online Consultation - SystemConnect

The first change we want to tell you about is an exciting new way of accessing a triage appointment.

Since early spring, we have been researching different online consultation platforms endorsed by the NHS in an effort to make accessing an appointment easier than it has ever been. Following a huge amount of research, planning and tweaking we are now ready to launch.

We are expecting that, everyone who is online and capable of using the internet, will use **SystemConnect** - which will be accessed through our website. This will be an easy process, involving answering a few, simple questions and submitting a request which goes to the most appropriate Clinician, for them to determine your next steps.

The majority of a triage telephone call is spent gathering information about your symptoms and illness that the clinician can then use to make a decision about how your care proceeds; by using **SystemConnect**, all of this information will be available for them immediately, meaning that the time they take per patient should be less - eventually meaning that we will be able to triage an increased number of patients every day.

The success of **SystemConnect** as a process will depend on you, our patients, using it as much as possible to free up our Reception team to deal with patient requests over the telephone. Initially, the amount of **SystemConnect** requests dealt with will be capped at the equivalent number of triage appointments an individual clinician handles on a daily basis.

SystemConnect is “going live” for triage on Monday 6th January 2025 and we encourage everyone to use it - you do not need an account to do so! Click the button below to bookmark the page ready for the “go live” date!



Triage

It is critical that patients understand that we **are not an urgent care service** and that, once our lists are full (we provide between 200 & 240 triage appointments per day), then we will ask you to call 111 or another service as appropriate, or call back the following day.

NHS 111 advises all patients to call 999 in the following circumstances:

- **Signs of a heart attack**

Chest pain, pressure, heaviness, tightness or squeezing across the chest

- **Signs of a stroke**

Face drooping on one side, can't hold up both arms, difficulty speaking

- **Sudden confusion**

Cannot be sure of own name

- **Suicide attempt**

by taking something or self-harm

- **Severe difficulty breathing**

Not being able to get words out, choking or gasping

- **Heavy bleeding**

Spraying, pouring or enough to make a puddle

- **Severe injuries**

After a serious accident

- **Seizure**

Shaking or jerking due to a fit, or unconscious and cannot be woken

- **Sudden, rapid swelling**

of the lips, mouth, throat or tongue

- **Labour or childbirth**

Waters breaking, more frequent intense cramps (contractions) baby coming or just born

[Link to the 111 website - https://111.nhs.uk/triage/](https://111.nhs.uk/triage/)

Keeping you in the loop

We believe that communication is the key to good care; and in the digital age more and more communication is being driven by technology. Additionally, the cost of traditional methods of communication - like postage - have skyrocketed in recent years meaning that these are not always viable methods of sending out information or invitations in bulk.

These societal changes, combined with the increasing costs of postage and the well publicised budgetary strain that the entire NHS faces mean that we need now, more than ever, to have digital ways of contacting our patients.

So we are asking all patients who have an email address or mobile telephone: please provide these details to the surgery along with your consent to use them to provide you necessary information or invitations in the future.

Our commitment to the security of the information you provide to us is unwavering; we can assure you that your information will:

- Be kept under the highest security as part of your medical record
- Only shared with other services directly involved in your care as part of your medical record
- Only send you text messages or emails that are pertinent to your care (including patient newsletters - like this)
- **Never shared without your permission**

Click the image on the right & select "Other admin request", or pop into the surgery to update your contact details and consents.



Christmas Jumper Days

Every year we support the Salisbury Hospice Charity by hosting Christmas Jumper Days for our staff - who come in wearing the festive best (or worst!) and donate a couple of their hard-earned pounds.

It's always a day that helps bring the festive cheer to our staff and patients, and is well-received by all.

As some of you may know, each of the past few years, our chosen charity is the Salisbury Hospice Charity, who cared for our colleague and friend, Elaine. The wonderful team at the Hospice do fantastic work each and every day to care for patients in the latter stages of their illness and supporting their loved ones through very difficult times. The dedication and the round-the-clock care they provide is inspirational, and invaluable.

We are, once again, hosting a Just Giving page that our patients can donate to this wonderful and deserving cause. We know that money can be tight at Christmas and are grateful for anything you can spare to help the Hospice to continue the incredible work they do.

You can donate by scanning the QR code (below), clicking on it (if you're viewing this digitally), or by typing this URL into your internet browser:



[https://www.justgiving.com/page/
three-chequers-christmas-
jumper-day-2024](https://www.justgiving.com/page/three-chequers-christmas-jumper-day-2024)

New (or little known) services

The NHS has some new services that patients may not know about, but might find useful over the festive period and beyond:



Mental Health Support

There is a new, national NHS mental health support line that is linked to NHS 111 - you simply have to dial 111 and then press 2 to access this. Click the icon on the left for more information.

Image links to NHS England website:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2024/08/nhs-111-offering-crisis-mental-health-support-for-the-first-time/>

SMS Emergency Service

Did you know you can text 999 in an emergency? For example, if you're in a remote environment where there is not sufficient signal for a phone call but there is for a text message. This is also a very important service for patients who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech impaired.



You must register for this service before you can use it; simply text the word **Register** to 999 and wait for the confirmation that you are registered.

Then, you can send an SMS containing information about which service you require (police, ambulance, fire, coastguard); what the problem is; and where the problem is (as specifically as possible including what3words location if possible. *Click the "SOS" icon (above) for more information.*

Image links to RelayUK BT website:

<https://www.relayuk.bt.com/how-to-use-relay-uk/contact-999-using-relay-uk.html>

999 & Domestic Violence

Sadly, domestic violence incidents always increase at this time of year. *If you experience domestic violence but cannot talk to an operator - dial 999 and press 55 to be transferred to the Police - the call handler will ask you discreet questions & give instructions to help keep you safe.*

Message from the Practice

This year seems to have been put in fast-forward and, in the blink of an eye, has one foot out of the door!

2024 has brought with it a fair few storms, both literal and metaphorical, at home and overseas. For General Practice, however, not much has changed - we are still in the midst of one of the most challenging periods in the history of the NHS and continue to see patient demand far outstrip capacity. We know that these factors affect our patients and staff more than anyone and we want to thank you all for your support over the past 12 months.

It's not all doom and gloom - 2024 brought with it some exciting developments; the introduction of our call-back system means that patients calling us have the option of requesting an automatic call-back that holds their place in the queue whilst they go about their day.

We also held our first (ever) COVID-19 vaccination clinics in the villages of Porton and Winterslow and vaccinated just over 1,200 patients over the course of these clinics. We want to thank Idmiston Memorial Hall and Winterslow Village Hall for accommodating us for these clinics.

It is always heart-warming to see the gifts of goodies and treats that patients bring in for our staff; we are very grateful to everyone who has brought some goodies for us - thank you!

As we approach 2025, we want to wish Happy Christmas to all of our patients and hope that the new year brings you joy and continued health.

MERRY
Christmas